

## WELCOME, MEETING OBJECTIVES AND AGENDA

Gail Bingham, RESOLVE, welcomed participants to the meeting and introduced the *National Conversation on Public Health and Chemical Exposures* co-chairs, Nsedu Obot Witherspoon, executive director of the Children's Environmental Health Network, and Dr. Howard Frumkin, director of NCEH/ATSDR.

Ms. Witherspoon also welcomed participants and thanked Dr. Frumkin for the invitation to join in the 18-month project. She commented on the United States' complex system for protecting public health from harmful chemical exposures, noting that the time has come for reflection on this system and further action to protect public health. She commented on the historical limitations of this system, opportunities for progress, and new areas for attention.

Dr. Frumkin expressed his delight in the diverse group of attendees drawn together by shared dedication to improving and protecting public health. He outlined the following goals for the day:

- to highlight the need for strengthening our nation's public health approach to chemical exposures,
- to explain the goals and process of the *National Conversation* project,
- to discuss key issues in smaller groups, and
- to generate interest in participating in ongoing activities as the project moves forward.

Dr. Frumkin charged attendees with networking with others, engaging in a robust conversation, and leaving with a clear sense of the goals for the conversation and a clear sense that they would like to be a part of it.